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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
INFORMATION REPORT

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25 YEAR RE-REVIEW

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1. During the period between 1945 and February 1948, the amount of agricultural land under administration of state farms was slightly greater than before World War II because land which had previously belonged to county farms (zemské statky) was now included under state farm administration. The county farms were liquidated in 1945. From March 1948 until about the end of 1950, the amount of land belonging to the state farms was increased very rapidly because all of the so-called residual estates (zbytkové statky) which had more than 50 hectares, i.e., those estates resulting from the agricultural reform during the early years of the First Republic, were appropriated into state farms. Quite a number of residual estates having less than 50 hectares were also appropriated in areas where the local situation was favorable to such appropriation. In addition, all the church farms, farms owned by the Catholic Church, were appropriated.
2. After 1950, the amount of property belonging to the state farms continued to be increased, although not as rapidly as in the previous period. All of the family estates, farms which had belonged to a particular family for generations, having acreage of more than 50 hectares were appropriated. Family estates having less than 50 hectares, the owners of which were designated as kulaks by the local CP, were also appropriated. Owners were designated kulaks whenever their property appeared advantageous to increasing the property of a local state farm or to establishing a new state farm. If the owner of the property was considered to be an enemy of the régime, he was not paid for his property; in other cases, the land was purchased by the state farms at a price fixed by them. However, the purchase price was only entered in the records of the Ministry of Agriculture and the owner of the property never actually received any monetary payment. The appropriation of family estates continued until the advent of the tenth CP Congress, late in 1953, when practically all land in the interior of Czechoslovakia desired by the state farms had been appropriated.

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3. After 1953, the state farms increased their property by appropriating some of the agricultural land which lay fallow in the border areas. New state farm units were to be established in the border areas and it was planned to complete the delimiting of land in the border areas by the end of 1956 and to begin cultivation in 1956. The nation-wide plan of capital investments for the development of state farms was also to be set up by the end of 1956. Establishing a plan for capital investments implies a production capacity based on a definite acreage limit. This would indicate there were no plans to enlarge state farm property after 1956. This supposition is supported by the fact that construction had actually begun on some of the state farms where the plan for capital investments had been established. It was common knowledge that state farms owned from eight to ten percent of all agricultural land in 1953. In late summer 1954, it was still too early to estimate the final acreage total which would be reached by 1956 because the surveying of land in the border areas was still in process.

4. The state farms were organized into a national enterprise headed by the Main Administration of State Farms within the Ministry of Agriculture. The Main Administration had the following main branches: Finance and Accounting, Statistics, Plant Production, Animal Production, Mechanization of State Farms, and Production Planning and Development.

5. Directly subordinate to the Main Administration were regional state farm trusts (Krajske trusy statnich statku), one for each region. The trusts acted as some sort of intermediary between the Main Administration and the regional national committees on questions of production planning for the state farms in a particular region. As far as production management was concerned, the trusts acted independently of the regional national committees. The trusts had branches similar to those of the Main Administration and supervised the large farm units (statky) in a particular region.

6. There was usually one large farm unit in each district of the interior and two or more large farm units in each border-area district because the state farms possessed much more land in the border areas than in the interior of the country. The large farm units in the interior of the country had from 2,000 to 3,000 hectares each, whereas large farm units in the border area had an average of from 5,000 to 7,000 hectares each. 25X1 the largest large-farm unit in Czechoslovakia was in Albrechtice (N 50-10, E 17-34) which had about 11,000 hectares; the second largest was in Hrusovany nad Jevišovkou (N 48-50, E 16-24). The smallest large-farm units were in the Zilina (N 49-10, E 19-00) and Gottwaldov regions. Each large farm unit was headed by a manager and consisted of a management section and several departments (oddeleni), usually five or six in number, sometimes as many as eleven. The management section had the following branches: Cadre Official, Chief Planning Official, Chief Agronomist (starsi agrotechnik), Chief of Animal Husbandry (starsi zootechnik), Chief Accountant, Building Technician who was in charge of building administration and supervision of new construction, Materiel Supply, Labor and Wages, Official for Mechanization (mechanizator), and Dispatcher who carried out instructions concerning assignment of heavy machinery given by the Official for Mechanization and was in charge of the assignment of personal automobiles. The position of manager was primarily political; only reliable CP members were appointed to this position. A few of them had some knowledge of agriculture but none of them was professionally qualified for the position. During the period 1951 through 1953, and probably during 1954, acting and future large-farm-unit managers were required to attend a one-year training course in Pohorelice (N 48-59, E 16-31). Although most of the managers had completed this training before 1954, the course did not noticeably improve their professional capabilities. Contrary to the policy followed in appointing managers, an effort was made to secure qualified personnel to fill the positions of branch chiefs.

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7. The departments of the large farm unit were the actual production units. The size of a department, determined by the acreage and number of farm buildings, was similar to the size of individual state farms which existed during the First Republic. A department was headed by a department manager, known as the administrator (spravce), who was responsible for carrying out production orders issued by the branch chiefs of the large farm unit. He was aided by a wage-accounting assistant, and, depending on the size of the department, by an assistant agronomist, an assistant in animal husbandry, and an assistant dealing with mechanization. These assistants were directly subordinate to the department administrator and only indirectly subordinate to the corresponding officials in the branches of the large farm unit management section. Each department had buildings and shops required by its size and activities, i.e., barns, machine sheds, repair shops, granaries, silos, and additional storage space.

8. A department had one or several farms under its control. A farm (farm) was the name given to a stable where one type of livestock was kept. The employee in charge of such a stable was called a farmer (farmar). When a farm was located so far from the department headquarters that it was not reasonable to manage it from the department headquarters, the farm was considered the smallest production unit which, although administered by the department headquarters, had its own auxiliary buildings, farm implements, team of horses, etc. Those in charge of the above-mentioned plan for capital investments adopted the policy of increasing the number of small production units located in the fields away from department headquarters. This policy was adopted because transportation of natural fertilizer and fodder between the department headquarters and remote fields was extremely costly. The agricultural workers at a department were organized into groups called working platoons. A foreman, called a platoon leader (cetar), was in charge of each platoon. Each platoon consisted of from five to twenty workers. There were usually two platoons within each department -- one for work in the fields and one for stables (farmy) and auxiliary buildings.

9. There were two types of agricultural machinery at each large farm unit -- heavy machinery and other machinery. Heavy machinery was used jointly by all departments and was assigned to them according to instructions from the Official for Mechanization. Heavy machinery included threshing machines, large plows (four or more plowshares), flax pullers, trucks, caterpillar tractors, and combines, i.e., threshing combines, combines for potato harvest, and combines for beet harvest. Combines, however, were quite rare in Czechoslovakia. Their use was, for the most part, in the trial stage, with the exception of the threshing combines which were in frequent use in southern Slovakia. All types of combines belonged to the large farm units only in those areas where they could be used to full capacity; in other areas they belonged to the regional trusts and were assigned to the large farm units by the trust's Official for Mechanization. Other machinery, such as small plows, tractors, mowing machines, binders, etc., as well as scythes, rakes, and other agricultural equipment, was assigned for the use of a single department.

10. The average monthly salary of a large-farm-unit manager was from 1,800 to 2,200 crowns, varying according to the acreage and fulfillment of the production plan. Branch chiefs received about 1,400 crowns per month. A department manager received from 900 to 1,200 crowns per month. The assistant agronomist received from 600 to 900 crowns. Wagon drivers received from 600 to 1,000 crowns. Women workers received about 2.20 crowns per hour. Employees working in stables earned up to 2,000 crowns per month, their salary depending on the number of animals entrusted to their care. The workers lived on the premises of the department; the officials lived in the large-

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farm-unit housing project and were entitled to partial rental allowance. None of the employees received any payment in agricultural products; however, employees had preference in purchasing the produce of their unit after planned deliveries were fulfilled. Prices paid for these purchases, called farm prices, were higher than prices paid to the large farm unit for bulk purchases but lower than prices paid on the consumers' market. The state farms suffered from a shortage of laborers, as did all Czechoslovak agriculture; however, the shortage was not as acute as it was in the Unified Agricultural Cooperatives (JZD) or on private farms. There was a greater shortage of seasonal workers than of permanent workers. As a result of the general government policy which began in 1954, the labor situation was improved throughout agriculture and especially on state farms, because new agricultural employees were sent to the state farms. This was especially true of those with agricultural education.<sup>1</sup>

11. State farms were organized as a national enterprise and, as such, were independent of local, district, and regional national committees, which were, therefore, not held responsible for production results of state farms. This was one of the main differences between state farms, on the one hand, and Unified Agricultural Cooperatives (JZD) and private farms, on the other. The state farms were the avant-garde of Socialist agriculture and all new production methods were first applied there. Research and development of new production methods were not the responsibility of the state farms but of various agricultural research institutes under the scientific direction of the Czechoslovak Academy of Agricultural Science and subordinate to the Ministry of Agriculture. The state farms were to maintain the balance of production for agriculture as a whole and were required to fulfill the production plan at any price. They had complete government support for this purpose: provision of capital investments; priority in supply of fodder, seed, plants, artificial fertilizers, and machinery; priority in hiring qualified personnel; and fixed minimum salaries for employees. The fact that the state farms were considered the avant-garde and that they had complete government support, which the state could not afford to give agriculture as a whole, the state farms will continue to own only a certain, relatively small percentage of the agricultural land of the nation and that Unified Agricultural Cooperatives (JZD) will continue to exist in spite of the fact that they do not entirely conform to Communist theory.

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12. Variety of plant production and the percentage of each type of crop produced at a large state farm unit were determined by the character of the soil in that area and, therefore, were similar to production at Unified Agricultural Cooperatives and private farms in the same area.

13. Animal production on state farms was to be higher than on Unified Agricultural Cooperatives and private farms. The goal was to be from 70% to 80% of one animal unit for state farms compared with 50% to 60% of one animal unit for cooperatives and private farms. One animal unit consisted of 500 kg. of meat, live weight, per one hectare. In spite of all the régime's effort, the state farms repeatedly failed to fulfill the production plan. In the case of the state farms, this was due to economic factors while non-fulfillment of production plans by the cooperatives and the private farms was primarily due to political factors.

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